

Heart Surgery: Preparing for Your Heart Surgery

Although you may feel nervous in the weeks leading up to your heart surgery, there are some basic instructions you must follow in order to be ready. If you smoke, you are at an increased risk for complications so make sure you talk to your cardiac care team about how to quit smoking.

Give your Cardiac care team a complete list of medications you take, including vitamins and supplements, in case you need to stop taking any of these before your surgery. If you take an Anticoagulant medication such as Warfarin or an Antiplatelet medication like Aspirin, your cardiac care team may ask you to stop taking it several days to weeks before your surgery due to an increased risk of bleeding. Make sure you talk to your Cardiac care team about exactly which medications you should continue to take and, which ones to stop.

Your cardiac care team may recommend specific tests to help identify exactly what type of heart surgery will be best for you and to check on your general health. These tests may include: Lab tests and blood work, an X-ray, an Electrocardiogram or ECG, and Breathing tests. You may be nervous, but these tests will help your cardiac care team better plan for your surgery.

Pack a small bag to take with you to the hospital. Your healthcare team will suggest specific items to include that can make your stay more comfortable. Leave your valuables at home. Before coming to the hospital, you may be asked to shower and shampoo thoroughly with a special Antiseptic soap.

Before your surgery, your cardiac team will tell you when to stop eating and drinking. If you have been told you can take some of your medications the morning of your surgery, take them with a small sip of water.

In the days leading up to your heart surgery you may feel anxious. But by following the preparation instructions given to you by your Cardiac care team you can feel both physically and emotionally ready for your surgery.